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The Man of Expedients.

Φοίτα δ' ἄλλοτε μὲν προσθ'—ἄλλοτ' ὀπίσθε.—

Homer's II. E. 595.

'All means they use, to all expedients run.'

Crabbe.

'It is a fine subject.

'Button-holes! there is something lively in the very idea of them—and trust me, when I get among them—you gentry with grey-beards—look as grave as you will—I'll make merry work with my button-holes—I shall have them all to myself—'tis a maiden subject—I shall run foul of no man's wisdom or fine sayings in it.'

Tristram Shandy.

THE man of expedients is he, who never providing for the little mishaps and stitch-droppings with which this mortal life is pestered, and too indolent or too ignorant to repair them in the proper way, passes his days in inventing a succession of devices, pretexts, substitutes, plans and commutations, by the help of which, he *thinks* he appears as well as other people.

Thus, the man of expedients may be said only to half live; he is the creature of outside; the victim of emergencies; whose happiness often depends on the possession of a pin, or the strength of a button-hole.—

Shade of Theophrastus! spirit of La Bruyere! assist me to describe him.—

In his countenance, you behold marks of anxiety and contrivance, the natural consequence of his shiftless mode of life. The internal workings of his soul are generally a compound of cunning and the heart-ach. One half of his time he is silent, languid, indolent; the other half he moves, bustles, and exclaims, 'What's to be done now?' His whole aim is to live as near as possible to the very verge of propriety. His business is all slightly performed, and when a transaction is over, he has no confidence in his own effectiveness, but asks, though in a careless manner, 'Will it do? Will it do?'

Look throughout the various professions and characters of life. You will there see men of expedients darting, and shifting, and glancing, like fishes in the stream. We will give a few tests, by which they may be recognised. If a merchant, the man of expedients borrows incontinently at two per cent. a month; if a sailor, he stows his hold with jury-masts, rather than ascertain if his ship be seaworthy; if a visitor where he

dislikes, he is called out before the evening has half expired ; if a musician, he scrapes on a fiddle string of silk ; if an actor, he takes his stand within three feet of the prompter ; if a poet, he makes *fault* rhyme with *ought*, and *look* with *spoke* ; if a reviewer, he fills up three quarters of his article with extracts from the writer whom he abuses ; if a divine, he leaves ample room in every sermon for an exchange of texts ; if a physician, he is often seen galloping at full rate, nobody knows where ; if a debtor, he has a marvellous acquaintance with short corners and dark alleys ; if a printer, he is adroit at *scabbaring* ; if a collegian, he commits Euclid and Locke to memory without understanding them, interlines his Greek, and writes themes *equal* to the Rambler.

But it is in the character of a general scholar, that the man of expedients most shines. He ranges through all the arts and sciences—in Cyclopedias. He acquires a most thorough knowledge of classical literature—from translations. He is very extensively read—in title pages. He obtains an exact acquaintance of authors—from Reviews. He follows all literature up to its source—in tables of contents. His researches are indefatigable—into indexes. He quotes memoriter with astonishing facility—the Dictionary of Quotations ;—and his bibliographical familiarity is miraculous—with Dibdin.

We are sorry to say, that our men of expedients are to be sometimes discovered in the region of morality. There are those, who claim the praise of a good action, when they have acted merely from convenience, inclination, or compulsion. There are those, who make a show of industry, when they are set in motion, only by avarice ; there are those, who are quiet and peaceable, only because they are sluggish ; there are those, who are sagely silent, because they have not one idea ; abstemious, from repletion ; patriots, because they are ambitious ; perfect, because there is no temptation.

Again, let us look at the man of expedients in argument. His element is the sophism. He is at home in a circle. His fort—his glory, is the *petitio principii*. Often he catches at your words and not at your ideas. Thus, if you are arguing that light is light, and he happens to be, (as it is quite likely he will,) on the other side of the question, he snatches at your phraseology, and exclaims, did you ever weigh it ? Sometimes he answers you by silence. Or if he pretends to any thing like a show of fair reasoning, he cultivates a certain species of argumentative obliquity, that defies the acutest logick,

When you think you have him in a corner, he is gone—he has slipped through some hole of an argument, which you hoped was only letting in the light of conviction. In vain you attempt to fix him—it is putting your finger on a flea.

But let us come down a little lower into life. Who appears so well and so shining at a ball room, as the man of expedients? Yet his small-clothes are borrowed, and as for his knee-buckles—about as ill matched, as if one had belonged to his hat and the other to a galoche,—to prevent their difference being detected, he stands sidewise towards his partner. Nevertheless, the circumstance makes him a more vivacious dancer, since, by the rapidity of his motions, he prevents a too curious examination from the spectators.

Search farther into his dress. You will find that he very genteelly dangles *one* glove. There are five pins about him, and as many buttons gone, or button-holes broken. His pocket-book is a newspaper. His fingers are his comb, and the palm of his hand his clothes-brush. He conceals his antiquated linen by the help of close garments, and adroitly claps a burr on the rent hole of his stocking while walking to church.

Follow him home. Behold his felicitous knack of metamorphosing all kinds of furniture into all kinds of furniture. A brick constitutes his right andiron, and a stone his left. His shovel stands him in lieu of tongs. His bellows is his hearth-brush, and a hat his bellows, and that too borrowed from a broken window-pane. He shaves himself without a looking-glass, by the sole help of imagination. He sits down on a table. His fingers are his snuffers. He puts his candlestick into a chair. That candlestick is a decanter. That decanter was borrowed. That borrowing was without leave. He drinks wine out of a tumbler. A fork is his cork-screw. His wine-glass he converts into a standish.

Very ingenious is he in the whole business of writing a letter. For that purpose he makes use of three eighths of a sheet of paper. His knees are his writing desk. His ruler is a book cover, and his pencil a spoon handle. He mends his pen with a pair of scissors. He dilutes his ink with water till it is reduced to invisibility. He uses ashes for sand. He seals his letter with the shreds and relicks of his wafer box. His seal is a pin.

When he takes a journey, his whiplash—But I shall myself be a man of expedients, if I fill ten pages with these minute details.

Oh reader, if you have smiled at any parts of the foregoing representation, let it be to some purpose. There is no fault we are all so apt to indulge, as that into which we are pushed by the ingenuity of indolence, namely, the invention of expedients.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

Translation of the First Satire of Boileau.

THE VICES OF PARIS.

Imitated from the third of Juvenal.

(¹)**DAMON**, whose wit so long amus'd the town,
 In works unmatch'd for numbers or renown,
 But who, poor wight! could scarcely earn a coat
 Of meanest serge for all he ever wrote;
 Who own'd no linen for his summer wear,
 Nor cloak, to shield him from the wintry air;
 Whose famish'd looks and miserable frame
 Far'd no whit better for his wide-spread fame;
 Wearied at length of lavishing his time,
 His powers, and comfort, in the trade of rhyme,
 Worn down with living daily upon trust,
 And plung'd, by ill success, in deep disgust,
 No longer knowing what on earth to do,
 Without one garment, and without one sous,
 Far from these wretched haunts has lately flown,
 And carried off—his misery alone.—
 Sheriffs, and writs, and courts, he leaves behind,
 For that repose, which he could never find.—
 To some blest region he resolves to go,
 Where Law, his fell, inexorable foe,
 Presents no yawning prison to his gaze,
 To crush the hopes of his remaining days,
 (²)No rude green cap (not useless, I allow)
 To blast the laurels which adorn his brow.

(1) Under this name, the author alludes to a good poet and scholar, whose name was Francois Cassandre; but an unsuccessful and unhappy misanthrope.

(2) This alludes to the law, borrowed from the Romans, that insolvent debtors should wear a green bonnet, as a mark of disgrace for having been negligent in their affairs.